



Why you need to get rid of acorns

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WTOP's Garden Editor Mike McGrath says more acorns could lead to trouble. (WTOP/Michelle Basch)

[Michelle Basch](#), wtop.com

WASHINGTON - The sky is falling with what some people think is an extra big batch of acorns this year, and that could be a problem for more than just the hood of your car.

According to weather lore, extra acorns are a sign a bad winter may be coming.

WTOP's Garden Editor Mike McGrath thinks otherwise.

"This is just a sign the trees had a good year," he says.

Despite that, McGrath says the added acorns could lead to trouble.

"Because humans don't harvest these nuts, it fuels the growth of two animals, especially mice and deer. That's a big problem for humans because white-footed field mice, the prime consumers of these acorns, are the No. 1 vector for the ticks that carry [Lyme disease](#)," he says.

"Every single tick that carries Lyme disease spent part of its life cycle on a field mouse, and this is going to lead to an explosion of mice which always leads to an explosion of ticks. So I think next spring will be a tremendously bad tick season and people need to prepare for it," he says.

McGrath says he was bitten by a deer tick last season.

"It's hard to tell that you even have a tick on you even if you're trained, even if you can inspect it closely. It just looks like a little scab, it just looks like a little skin tag or something. They don't look like the big dog ticks that are really obvious and gross and disgusting. Most people who develop symptoms of a tickborne disease don't recall being bitten by the tick," he says.

To avoid attracting mice to your yard, McGrath recommends collecting fallen acorns and throwing them out with the garbage.

One way to do that is with a good yard vacuum, but there's another method.

"Some of our listeners learned years ago to buy really fine pond netting, the kind of netting you use to keep leaves out of like a koi pond. And they'll lay it down in the grass before the nut drop and then they'll just pull it all up and it's like a fishing net all the acorns are inside," he says.

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